

**Implementation Sub-Committee of The Task Force on Federal  
Legislation  
Of the Children's Cabinet**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**January 06, 2006**

- 1. Meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM.**
- 2. The 7/8/05 minutes were reviewed and approved as written.**
- 3. FIP Data Reports – Randy Rosati**

**Randy Rosati distributed the November 2005 DHS Data Report. Randy made the following observations as we reviewed the data in the report.**

- ü The FIP caseload continues its steady decline with 12,102 cases active in November.**
- ü The caseload distribution by city and town remains the same.**
- ü Of the 12,102 FIP cases there are 847 two parent families; a decrease of about 78 cases since November 2004, 7216 single parent cases a decrease of 1158 since last November and 4039 child only cases have remained stable.**
- ü There were 1420 time limit child only cases, which is an increase of about 200 since last year.**
- ü Monthly case openings overall increased since last year. There**

were 131 more case openings in November 2004 than Nov 2005. This increase was evident in two parent cases, single parent cases and child only cases.

ü Monthly case closings of cases closed over 31 days were down slightly since 2004.

ü FIP case closings due to employment were down slightly in 2005.

ü The percent of cases with earned income rose slightly in November 2005 from 13.5% of all cases to 21.8% of all cases.

ü Of the 1761 cases with employment the greatest number were working between 20-24 hours and the next largest group was 30 –34 hours.

ü There was an increase in exemptions due to pregnancy while the other exempt cases by type of exemption remained stable as compared to 2004.

ü The average monthly benefit per case is the lowest that it has been in two years.

ü The teen parent caseload has shown a slight decline. Of the 608 cases 54 cases were of teens under age 18.

ü There has been a steady decline in the number of sanctioned cases. Randy next reported on the data in the Quarterly Report.

ü Most children receiving child care subsidies were enrolled in center based child care school age and pre school children were the majority of children in center-based care.

ü The percent of those applying for cash assistance who were non exempt and not employed dropped from 52% in 1997 to 34.5% in 2005.

ü Although the number of Domestic Violence Waivers has increased somewhat since the year 2000 it has remained relatively steady since 2003.

ü The number of FIP non-citizens has declined steadily between 1998 and 2005, decreasing by 1570 cases in that time period.

ü About 70% of the FIP cases now active have received FIP for up to two years. About four percent have received FIP for four years or more.

#### **4. TANF Reauthorization And Implications For Rhode Island Family Independence Program**

Donalda Carlson led the discussion of the status of TANF reauthorization. The TANF reauthorization is included in the Budget Reconciliation Bill. It is currently in the House of Representatives for changes necessary to make it comport with the Senate passed version of the Bill. The Bill makes no changes in TANF goals and state plan provisions. Numerous other TANF proposals are not addressed in the Bill and therefore are no longer being considered for TANF Reauthorization. Some major proposals which were previously thought to be part of reauthorization included universal engagement, increased hours of participation (up to 40), increased all family participation rates up to 70% of the caseload, elimination of the 2-parent family distinction, TANF super waivers, and mandatory drug testing. Donalda clarified that funding for TANF Block Grant

remains level while Child Care and LIHEAP has been increased.

The final signoff in the House is expected to occur on or about February 1, 2006. Assuming final passage, the changes that will affect Rhode Island include a change in the way the caseload reduction credit is calculated. Until now the caseload reduction credit has brought our participation rate into the acceptable range. The new calculation method, which changes the base year to be used for the calculation, will make it much more difficult for RI to achieve the required participation rate of 50% for all families and 90% for 2-parent families. This issue is exacerbated by the fact that we are already in the program year that will be used in the calculations and will be using the 2005 as the new base year. This means that we need to redouble our efforts to ensure that clients are participating in approved program activities. Other changes that will require modification to the FIP program are changes to what will be considered approved work activities, newly required systems to verify participation in work activities, and the application of participation rates to participants in separate state programs. If finalized these changes are expected to be effective Oct 1, 2006 putting Rhode Island and most other states at serious risk for future penalties. The Rhode Island FIA law is not compatible with these new TANF reauthorization provisions. Legislative changes are required to make FIA and TANF compatible, however, as the bill is currently described, the new TANF rules will become effective before many states' legislation can be changed, including Rhode Island's.

**Discussion ensued on ways to increase FIP client participation in activities and entrance into employment. One suggestion that will be explored is the creation of a coalition of State agencies involved in education and employment. The coalition could include DLT, HRIC, DED and WIB.**

**Meeting was adjourned at 11:45 AM. The next meeting was scheduled for February 3, 2006.**